CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 1 February 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: U Aye (Myanmar)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 723rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me at the outset to extend a very warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Lena Hjelm-Wallén, who will be our first speaker for today. Her presence among us today is highly appreciated and is a further reminder of her country's active and abiding interest in the work of this forum, and of the importance attached to the attainment of the objective of the cessation of all nuclear tests. I am sure her statement will be followed with great interest by the Conference.

I also have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Egypt, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, and representatives of the United States of America, France, Australia, Japan, Sri Lanka, Chile and South African.

Once we have listened to the speakers on the list, I intend to invite the Conference to consider the new requests received from Armenia, Yemen and Mauritius for participation in our work as non-members. As usual, these requests have been placed in delegations' pigeon-holes.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Lena Hjelm-Wallén.

Mrs. HJELM-WALLEN (Sweden): Permit me first of all, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this crucial stage of its work. I wish you every success in your endeavours and pledge the full support of the Swedish delegation. Allow me also to pay my respects to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his deputy Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and thank them, and their staff, for their professional and dedicated work for the Conference.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament at this particular juncture. For the first time in the history of nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test-ban treaty is now within reach. We must seize this opportunity and make every effort to conclude these negotiations within the next few months.

Over the years, the Conference, and its predecessors, have laid the foundations for our efforts to achieve disarmament and to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This is a heritage which should encourage us to proceed further towards our vision of a world free from weapons of mass destruction. We must never forget that the mandate of the Conference is ultimately based on mankind's legitimate quest for peace and security.

In this forum, treaties of historic importance for mankind have been concluded: in 1968, the non-proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons; in 1971, the Convention on bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons; and, in

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1992, the Convention on chemical weapons. We have now had the unique opportunity to add 1966 to this list as the year when the international community decided to ban all nuclear-weapon tests and all other nuclear explosions for ever. This will, indeed, be an historic achievement.

In the weeks and months to come, we must increase our efforts to reach this goal. States which have the capability to carry out nuclear tests or explosions have a great responsibility to refrain from actions which could negatively affect our work. Further tests or other nuclear explosions could seriously undermine what has already been achieved and jeopardize the negotiations. Sweden deeply regrets that China and France have continued nuclear testing during our negotiations, the latest test only last week. We welcome the announcement last Monday by President Chirac that France will now stop all nuclear tests. We urge China to follow this example.

All States must set aside short-term military or domestic political considerations and heed the call of a strong international opinion: No more nuclear tests!

For decades, Sweden has actively contributed to international efforts to achieve a CTBT. Permit me in this connection to pay a special tribute to my late compatriots, Alva Myrdal and Inga Thorson, who worked assiduously for many years, inter alia, in this very hall, towards the goal that we are now about to reach. Sweden has for decades also conducted specific disarmament-related research at its National Defence Research Establishment (FOA) in order to make highly qualified scientific expertise available to multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. In 1995, Sweden had the honour to chair the CTBT Working Group on Verification.

We firmly support the conclusion of the CTBT before the end of June. This would allow the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a resolution at its fiftieth session commending the Treaty to the international community. The Treaty could then be opened for signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

Sweden calls for a rapid solution to the outstanding issues in the negotiations. It is important that all member States express their unambiguous support for a true-zero-yield test ban. A complete test ban must also include so-called peaceful nuclear explosions, which technically are no different from nuclear-weapon tests.

The verification provisions must be drafted in such a way as to deter non-compliance with the treaty and enable the resolution of any ambiguous events.

Sweden welcomes the offer by Vienna to host the CTBT organization. We note with satisfaction the emerging consensus within the CD in favour of locating the organization in that city. We also believe that close collaboration between the CTBT organization and IAEA would present many advantages.

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It is of paramount importance to achieve universal adherence to the CTBT. However, provisions for the entry into force of the treaty must not be formulated in such a way that any State might hold the treaty hostage.

As the negotiations now enter the final stage, every participating delegation must be prepared to compromise. If not, the treaty will be put at stake. Delegations must be ready to refrain from there preferred national positions. We cannot always reach the goals that we ourselves consider to be ideal. Instead, solutions have to be sought which are workable and acceptable to all.

Against this background, Sweden has, for its part, decided to join the emerging consensus on certain issues, where we had our own proposals. We have done so in a spirit of compromise in order to contribute to the rapid conclusion of the negotiations.

I urge all participants to act in the same spirit. It is the only way in which we can reach our common goal, a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In 1965, the then Swedish Foreign Minister, Mr. Torsten Nilsson, addressed the United Nations General Assembly and proposed a package of three main elements. Firstly, steps to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Secondly, a comprehensive test ban, and thirdly, a halt to the production of fissile material for military purposes. Mr. Nilsson pointed out that the realization of these proposals would have a stabilizing effect and underlined that satisfactory and mutually acceptable methods of verification could be worked out, given a minimum amount of goodwill. As a result of determined international cooperation and constructive and concrete proposals by a number of concerned States, the non-proliferation Treaty was concluded in 1968. However, it took almost three decades until the international political climate changed in favour of the other visions from the 1960s. We now finally stand on the threshold of a new era in which all nuclear tests will be banned for ever. There is also the prospect of starting negotiations on a so-called "cut-off" treaty.

A lesson to be drawn from the past 30 years is that our work for disarmament requires long-term planning, patience and political vision. We have now reached the stage where it is necessary to spell out new objectives for future disarmament and to formulate the concrete steps which can lead us in that direction.

The decision to extent the non-proliferation Treaty indefinitely was based on the understanding that the process of nuclear disarmament would continue towards the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We must not lose sight of this fundamental objective. In this respect, a particular responsibility is placed on the nuclear-weapon States. If these States do not fulfil their obligations in the Treaty, the NPT will be undermined. This was pointed out clearly in the Nobel Lecture some weeks ago by Dr. Joseph Rotblat, the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate:

> "We are told that the possession of nuclear weapons - in some cases even the testing of these weapons - is essential for natural security. But

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this argument can be made by other countries as well. If the militarily most powerful - and least threatened - States need nuclear weapons for their security, how can they deny such security to countries that are truly insecure? The present nuclear policy is a receipt for proliferation."

There are many unwanted phenomena which have been invented and later banned. We have been able to agree to ban chemical and biological weapons. The existence of nuclear weapons is not a sufficient reason to retain them. The political obstacles to nuclear disarmament must be removed, primarily by developing credible verification measures and by strengthening international cooperation, confidence and political will.

We need a clear map to guide us in the process aiming at a nuclear-free world. It is first of all imperative that the important reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals, agreed in START I and II, be fully implemented. START I has entered into force and its implementation is under way. Sweden welcomes the recent decision by the United States Senate to ratify START II. We urge the Russian Federation to take the necessary steps towards ratification as soon as possible, so that START II can enter into force and be implemented without delay. This would also provide a basis for further disarmament negotiations, where all nuclear-weapon States participate and accept the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. These negotiations should include specific time-frames for the ultimate goal as well as for the intermediate steps.

As regards the work of this Conference, the highest priority must now be given to the completion of the CTBT. This is, in our view, the next step towards the ultimate goal. We should not jeopardize this unique opportunity by adding new elements, however desirable we consider them to be.

We must also, as soon as possible, start negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices (the so-called "cut-off"). This would be in line with the objectives unanimously approved by the NPT Review and Extension Conference. And, as the single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, the CD would thereby take on another important task.

However, in the view of the Swedish Government, the CD must also explore the possibilities of dealing with the issue of nuclear disarmament. I therefore welcome the fact that you, Mr. President, intend to conduct intensive consultations with a view to developing a basis for consensus on this issue and to report to the Conference at the earliest opportunity. I urge all participants to approach these consultations in good faith and with a constructive spirit. The Conference cannot afford to fail on this issue.

A year ago, the Commission on Global Governance proposed in its report Our Global Neighbourhood that the goal should be to reach an agreement within 10 to 15 years on the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Swedish Government supports this proposal. Within the framework set out by the

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decisions taken at the 1995 NPT Conference, Sweden will continue to work together with other countries in taking definite steps towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Commission on Global Governance is one example of the importance of letting different actors contribute to a more positive political climate. It is my hope that the newly established Canbarra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons will give important new impulses to the work on disarmament. The persistent and patient work which is done both by national and international non-governmental organizations is also of great importance to persuade decision makers to take significant steps in the right direction.

The end of the cold war has given a unique opportunity to eliminate nuclear weapons. But the elimination of these weapons is not primarily a technical matter for experts at international conferences. Basically, it is a matter of values. We need a common set of values, such as tolerance and trust, not only to eliminate nuclear arms but to build sustainable, just and peaceful relations between States and peoples.

When Olof Palme presented the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues to the United Nations General Assembly in 1982 he stated:

> "It is of paramount importance to replace the doctrine of mutual deterrence. Our alternative is common security. There can be no hope of victory in a nuclear war; the two sides would be united in suffering and destruction. They can survive only together. They must achieve security not against the adversary but together with him. International security must rest on a commitment to join survival rather than on a threat of mutual destruction."

The efforts of the Conference on Disarmament are crucial in the process of dismantling the tools and structures of old doctrines on the balance of power and how to achieve security. At the same time, the careful work and long-term perspective of the CD help us to develop a culture and a practice of common security. And in this work, let us first join efforts in bringing the CTBT negotiations to a successful conclusion.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Permit me at the outset, Mr. President, to express the congratulations of the Egyptian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the CD and on the efficient manner in which you have conducted the work of the Conference, thereby allowing for a smooth start to our 1996 session. I avail myself of this opportunity to pledge to you the full support of the Egyptian delegation. I should also like to convey my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, who guided the work of the Conference admirably throughout the latter part of our 1995 session.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

I take this opportunity to welcome the new colleagues who have recently joined us at the CD, namely Ambassador Rodríguez of Cuba on my right, Ambassador Tolle of Kenya and Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria, and I look forward to working closely with them in the future.

At the beginning of this meeting we heard the important statement by her Excellency Lena Hjelm-Wallén, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. I wish to congratulate her on her statement and to commend the participation of her country in the efforts to bring about disarmament in general, and in the Conference on Disarmament in particular. Her statement reflects the closeness of the positions of Egypt and Sweden on disarmament questions in general, and on nuclear disarmament in particular. Here I wish to refer specifically to the efforts of Ambassador Lars Norberg of Sweden during his chairmanship of Working Group 1 of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban dealing with the issue of verification, throughout the 1995 session and until January of this year before the current session.

I have asked for the floor today in order to address an issue of the utmost importance to Egypt and to most of the non-nuclear States, namely nuclear disarmament. Before dealing with this issue, permit me to make a few observations about the work of the CD in 1996. The Egyptian delegation is most satisfied at the prompt re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban this year, and we are confident that under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ramaker of the Netherlands, and with the good will of all CD members, the Committee will be able to conclude the CTBT negotiations at the earliest possible date in 1996. The issue of the CTBT has long been on the international disarmament agenda and the time is ripe to address this subject in a resolute and final manner. In this context, and having been elected Chairman of Working Group 2, dealing with legal and institutional matters, I should like to assure you that I will do my utmost to carry out this responsibility as efficiently as possible. I also look forward to cooperating fully with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Ramaker, and the Chairman of Working Group 1, Ambassador Berdennikov.

Speaking as a representative of Egypt, I should like to make a few observations on some of the most prominent controversial issues in the framework of the CTBT negotiations. With respect to the question of "scope", it is our view that the treaty must ban all nuclear explosions in every environment for all time. To permit low-yield explosions or peaceful nuclear explosions would be tantamount to incorporating a serious loophole in the text of this treaty which would undermine its overall credibility. On that basis, and pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, we have welcomed all initiatives involving moratoriums on nuclear testing and most recently President Chirac's announcement of the conclusion of the series of French nuclear tests, which we had hoped would not take place at all. We also hope that, in the future, no State, under any pretext, will conduct further nuclear tests or explosions. We also view the CTBT as a disarmament measure which must put an end to the qualitative and quantitative proliferation of nuclear weapons, whether vertically or horizontally. We therefore welcome the remarks of Mr. John Holum, the Director of the United States Arms Control and

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Disarmament Agency, who addressed the CD at its meeting of 23 January 1996 saying, and I quote, "The test ban is ... a bulwark against the spread and further evolution of nuclear weapons capabilities".

We have also taken note of the proposals made on 26 January 1996 by the delegation of India with respect to the preamble and the articles on the entry into force and review of the treaty. We feel that these and all other proposals should be carefully studied so as to enable us to reach a convergence of views on issues that remain unresolved.

As regards the "Organization" we are still of the view that IAEA would be best qualified, with a broadening of its responsibilities, to carry out this task. This would allow for significant savings to be achieved and would make available the vast technical experience gained by the Agency over the years. If, however, that proposal were not to meet with consensus, we could agree to the establishment of an independent small organization that would conclude contractual arrangements with IAEA, particularly with respect to verification, so as to make the greatest possible use of the Agency's experience and capabilities in this field. The Executive Council must operate in a just and democratic manner. We do not, therefore, agree to the retention of what are called "permanent seats". At a time when efforts are under way to reform the United Nations Security Council, its composition and its working methods, it would be illogical for us to set up here an Executive Council which would incorporate the same disadvantages that the Members of the United Nations are trying to rectify in the Security Council.

On the question of the seat of the organization, like other States we shall determine our final position in the light of our evaluation of the offer made. As there is at the present stage only one offer to host the organization, there is no possibility of comparison. However, we consider it might be appropriate for the offer of Austria to be in accord with what was agreed after long negotiations with the Swiss authorities regarding the seat of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Although the requirements of the CTBTO are different from those of WTO, the precedent of WTO is the best model to follow.

As for on-site inspection, this is a subject that was comprehensively discussed during the negotiations on the chemical weapons Convention and we believe that the CTBT would usefully benefit from the CWC, the negotiation of which took a great deal of effort and time before consensus was reached.

As far as entry into force of the treaty is concerned, it is our view that a formula should be found to ensure that entry into force takes place only with all nuclear States and all threshold States on board.

While we are well aware of the fact that at this stage it is appropriate to devote all the time available to the CD to the CTBT negotiations, we are also most satisfied by the decision to appoint Ambassador Hocine Meghlaoui of Algeria as Special Coordinator of the Conference on the future of the Conference's agenda. We are confident that Ambassador Meghlaoui's efforts will help the Conference to meet the new challenges ahead of it without neglecting the old challenges which have yet to be resolved.

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Since this statement concentrates on nuclear issues of the highest priority, I do not wish to reiterate our positions concerning the non-nuclear issues on our provisional agenda. Let me only state that we continue to attribute great importance to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and consider that military action in this environment must be totally prohibited. As for transparency in armaments, it must be dealt with comprehensively in such a way as to cover all kinds of armaments, be they conventional or weapons of mass destruction, so that we can achieve real transparency without selectivity and thus help to develop an early warning mechanism to assist in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. President, I would like to convey to you my gratitude for your having undertaken intensive consultations on the issue of nuclear disarmament and I urge you to continue these consultations until you arrive at a satisfactory result. It is our view that we have been unable to reach a consensus on this issue only because of the continuous opposition of a few members of the Conference who have thus prevented progress in this most important of fields in the present phase of the history of the CD. Now that we have appointed a Special Coordinator to deal with the future of the CD agenda, we hope that this issue will be dealt with in conformity with the trend towards the democratization of international relations, bearing in mind the spirit of consensus.

For several decades now the issue of nuclear disarmament has been on the disarmament agenda. None of us can deny that two nuclear-weapon States, namely the United States of America and the Russian Federation, have indeed made positive bilateral moves in this direction, but there is also no denying that other nuclear-weapon States have yet to commit themselves to any moves at all and that the expectations of the vast majority of the international community have not yet been met. Speeches, action plans, final documents, resolutions and decisions have been issued by the international community, the United Nations and other international forums, including the Non-Aligned Movement, calling for nuclear disarmament. These documents could fill volumes but some nuclear-weapon States continue to regard them with indifference.

It is true that nuclear issues are being dealt with in various forums and most notably the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly. Nevertheless issues are never dealt with in a comprehensive and conclusive manner. For example the security assurance given by the five nuclear-weapon States in Security Council resolution 984 to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT fall far short of expectations since these have not been negotiated multilaterally and are not legally binding or comprehensive. The decision that was adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference in May 1995 on "Principles and objectives" must therefore be implemented by the CD and serious negotiations must be started on a multilateral and legally binding instrument to provide comprehensive security assurances as soon as possible to non-nuclear-weapon States.

The issue of banning the production of fissile material is another case in point since a ban on the production of such material must not ignore past production and stockpiles, otherwise it would be a half-measure which would only go part of the way towards resolving this problem. The same applies to

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the comprehensive test-ban treaty being negotiated in this very chamber. While nuclear tests in their traditional forms are to be banned, it seems clear that there are new forms of testing which nuclear or threshold States will continue to develop and improve, particularly those States that have the material and technological resources to be able to do so. These examples illustrate that, despite the overwhelming support of the international community for nuclear disarmament, the progress that is being achieved in the field of real nuclear disarmament is less than satisfactory, and what is even more disquieting is that those that are opposed to nuclear disarmament are the very same States that are endeavouring to de-prioritize this issue, thus raising doubts as to their real commitment to the so-called ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament referred to in article VI of the NPT and the decision on "Principles and objectives" adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

I do not wish here to enumerate the numerous appeals for nuclear disarmament which have been made by the international community, most recently by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and at the Non-Aligned summit in Cartagena. I do, however, wish to urge the Conference yet again to agree to the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to start negotiations on a phased programme with the eventual aim of eliminating all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. Such a committee could immediately start preparatory work so as to work at full power immediately following the conclusion of our negotiations on a CTBT. Needless to say, my delegation fully endorses the statement made by the Ambassador of Peru on behalf of the Group of 21 on the issue of nuclear disarmament before the plenary meeting of the CD on 23 January 1996.

I shall conclude on a positive note and show that the States that do not possess nuclear weapons are the most committed to the objective of nuclear disarmament and seek a similar commitment from the nuclear Powers. I am pleased to announce that at the beginning of next April Cairo will host the signing ceremony of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty. Reference to this treaty should be inserted in the article entitled "Relation to other international agreements" in the CTBT if it is agreed to include such an article in the treaty. In this connection I wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo, the United Nations Expert Adviser responsible for negotiations on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, whose efforts helped to expedite the conclusion of work on this important and historic treaty.

We view the treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa as a positive and encouraging step which should be followed in the near future by negotiation on the establishment of a similar nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, particularly in view of the enthusiasm for progress towards the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative

(The President)

Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, Dr. Ola Dahlman, who will present the Group's progress report on its forty-second session, contained in document CD/1372.

Mr. DAHLMAN (Sweden): I am pleased to introduce today the progress report of the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Group. The report is contained in document CD/1372. The session was held from 27 November to 1 December 1995 and experts and representatives from 34 countries attended.

The main topic of the session was to provide a recommendation on an auxiliary network of seismic stations for the envisaged international monitoring system of a nuclear-test-ban treaty. These auxiliary seismic stations would supplement the primary seismic network of 50 stations listed in brackets in the rolling text CD/1364. The design of the primary network was based on the results earlier provided by the Group of seismic experts.

The Ad Hoc Group noted that the principal purposes of the auxiliary stations are to improve the location accuracy of seismic events detected by the primary network and to facilitate the characterization of seismic sources for event identification.

To achieve a cost-effective system the Group tried to utilize to the extent possible, available and planned seismic stations of suitable quality worldwide. To improve event location accuracy the auxiliary stations have to be placed in such a way that they fill gaps in the azimuthal coverage of the primary network for different source regions. It is of prime importance that those stations cover the most active seismic regions of the world, with emphasis on regions where earthquakes look explosion-like. Auxiliary stations should further cover areas where extensive mining activity produces seismic signals detected by the primary network.

Considerable analysis and computational efforts were put into the design of a cost-effective auxiliary network. Most of this work was conducted prior to the group session by its Working Groups on Planning, under the convenorship of Mr. Mykkeltveit of Norway, and on Evaluation, which has Mr. Massinon of France as its convenor. In its design work, the Group made extensive use of the results obtained so far during GSETT-3. Through computer simulations those results, which so far are available for limited geographical areas only, were applied on a global scale to predict the performances of alternative global networks.

The Group agreed on a network of 111 stations to primarily cover the continents. The locations of these stations are shown in figure 1 of CD/1372 and the stations are listed in table 1. As can be seen from the table, it was possible to design a network using existing stations to a large extent. As many as 81 of the proposed 111 continental auxiliary stations are today operational with proper equipment, although communication links might not necessarily be available. Seven more stations are operational but have to be technically upgraded, and thus only 23 new stations are needed.

The Group also agreed on 17 additional stations, listed in table 2 of the progress report, on small islands to provide for improved coverage of ocean

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areas. The Group made this recommendation with the understanding that these stations should be considered by the IMS Expert Group together with the hydroacoustic component of the IMS. This synergy between seismic and hydroacoustic systems has been considered and reported on in CD/NTB/WP.283.

The Ad Hoc Group recognized that there are many additional stations not included in this recommended network which could make a positive contribution to the location and identification of seismic events. The Group noted that a number of States are prepared to make available data from such national facilities.

The combined primary and auxiliary network should, in the view of the Ad Hoc Group, be capable of locating seismic events of magnitude 4 or higher in continental areas with an uncertainty of no more than 1,000 square kilometres. To locate seismic events with such high accuracy requires careful calibration of the actual network, drawing on events with known locations, such as large chemical explosions or earthquakes, being located with high accuracy, using data from local or regional networks. Such calibrations are needed to eliminate the systematic bias created by heterogeneities within the Earth. Calibration is a time-consuming process that requires systematic analysis of suitable events as they occur, and it results in a gradual improvement of the accuracy of the system. The need for calibration is one reason why the Ad Hoc Group supports the continued testing and evaluation of the global seismic network, to provide for a seamless transition into the future international monitoring system.

On 1 January the Group's large-scale experiment, GSETT III, had been going on for one year. At present, 45 countries are contributing data from, in all, 42 primary and 85 auxiliary stations. With few exceptions, the stations participating in GSETT-3 are stations proposed for the primary and auxiliary IMS networks respectively. Efforts are being made to bring the GSETT-3 primary and auxiliary networks even closer to those being considered for the IMS.

A large number of the stations considered for the IMS network are thus in test operation today and valuable experience is being gained both on the performance of the primary and auxiliary networks as such and on the performance of individual stations. Aside from the crucial issue mentioned earlier - the calibration of individual stations for events in various regions of the world - another challenge is to fine-tune the detection algorithms at the IDC for the individual stations to optimize the detection capability of the system. Work is also under way on procedures to characterize observed seismic events. Other more technical issues relate to reliability, redundancy and information security.

The CSE Working Group on Evaluation is presently evaluating the results and experiences gained from GSETT-3 during 1995, and the Ad Hoc Group plans to report to the Conference on Disarmament on the results following the Group's next meeting in mid-February.

The GSE sessions are important to guide and evaluate GSETT-3 and I express my great appreciation for the excellent support provided by the

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secretariat during the sessions and in facilitating contacts with delegations between sessions. The bulk of the GSETT-3 work is, however, not carried out at the GSE meetings here in Geneva but through the everyday work at participating stations and at the experimental IDC in Arlington, Virginia, United States.

The GSE work has also been most significantly supported by informal meetings and workshops arranged by individual countries and scientific institutions around the world.

The Ad Hoc Group noted with appreciation the convening of an informal technical workshop on CTBT monitoring and GSETT-3 in Lahti, Finland in October 1995 in connection with the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Finnish array station FINESS. Thirty experts from 11 countries participated and the workshop was an important contribution to the progress of GSETT-3.

The Ad Hoc Group also appreciated the convening of an informal regional GSETT-3 workshop in San Juan, Argentina, in late November 1995. The purpose of the workshop was to inform government representatives and scientists from Central and Latin American countries about the GSETT-3 experiment and to encourage additional countries from that region to participate. Most Central and Latin American countries were represented and an interesting and useful dialogue was established with participating GSE experts. I found the meeting most rewarding and I am confident that it will lead to a considerably increased participation by scientific institutions in Central and Latin America, especially in the evaluation and calibration of the global system. It also aroused considerable interest in the IDC and its training programme, which is attracting an international staff.

The possibility of convening additional such workshops in Africa and South East Asia is being considered. In my view, one of the main remaining tasks for GSE is to increase the knowledge of seismic monitoring and the operation of a global monitoring system among scientists around the world. To have knowledgeable experts available in many countries is a prerequisite to obtaining a credible global verification system. GSETT-3 could, in this perspective, be looked upon as a large global training exercise in which all countries can participate, especially in calibration and evaluation.

Another important remaining task for GSE, in my view, is to maintain and develop the extensive investments made in seismic stations worldwide and in the IDC prior to or during GSETT-3. To deliver those facilities in an operational mode to the Preparatory Commission would be a valuable contribution to the establishment of the IMS in a cost-effective way.

The next GSE session, as already approved by the Conference on Disarmament, will be convened from 12 to 23 February 1996. The main purpose of this meeting is to evaluate the first year of GSETT-3 and prepare an evaluation report to the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Dr. Dahlman for his statement. I should like to draw attention to paragraph 15 of document CD/1372 and remind members that the Conference already approved, on 14 September 1995 at its 718th plenary meeting, the holding of the next session of the Ad Hoc Group which will be convened from 12 to 23 February 1996.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): First, Mr. President, may I congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair as President of the Conference and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation during your tenure. The rapid re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban was indeed an auspicious beginning to your presidency, a beginning which we all hope augurs well for the equally rapid and successful conclusion of the CTBT negotiations.

As part of the ongoing effort by the United States to discharge its commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament, I wish today to report for the record that, on 26 January, the United States Senate gave its formal consent to ratification, without amendments, of the second strategic arms reduction Treaty, START II. The vote was 87 to 4, an overwhelming vote of confidence.

The distinguished Foreign Minister of Sweden, who honoured us today with her presence, and who enlightened us with her message, was kind enough to welcome this important development in her statement at the opening of this plenary today.

President Clinton, in his statement following the Senate vote, applauded this historic action on START II and said it would "make every American, every Russian, and people all over the world more secure". He noted that "START II requires dramatic cuts in the nuclear arsenals of the two countries. Together with the START I Treaty which was brought into force in December 1994, it will eliminate submarine, bomber and land-based missile launchers that carried more than 14,000 warheads - two thirds of the nuclear arsenals the United States and the former Soviet Union maintained at the height of the cold war. START II will also eliminate the most destabilizing type of nuclear weapon - the multiple-warhead ICBM."

Secretary of State Christopher also welcomed the Senate vote and said that the "United States looks forward to the START II Treaty entering into force as soon as possible". In this regard, the Secretary urged the Russian Duma "promptly to approve START II, and thus ensure that our two countries and the entire world can begin to realize the benefits of its deep reductions". He noted that "START II's deep cuts in Russian and American nuclear arsenals will help make the fear of massive nuclear conflict a thing of the past", and that the "implementation of START II's far-reaching provisions will also help the United States and Russia work together to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction".

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

Mr. President, I plan to submit to you for circulation as official documents of the CD the text of the President's statement on Senate ratification of START II, as well as the text of a White House release entitled "Background information: START II ratification".

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of our Conference at the beginning of a session which we all agree will be a decisive one. Allow me also to thank you on behalf of my delegation for the fruitful efforts you made to ensure that Conference started work immediately without wasting precious time.

On 29 January the President of the French Republic announced the permanent cessation of nuclear testing. At the same time he confirmed that France would spare no effort to achieve the signature this year of a treaty completely and definitively banning nuclear tests. This declaration is in keeping with the one made on 13 June 1995, which was also composed of two parts. First, the completion of a series of tests suspended in 1992. Second, the related decision to sign the CTBT in autumn 1996, if possible.

France has upheld and will uphold its commitments. With regard to nuclear tests, it has exercised utmost restraint and kept to a bare minimum both the number and the duration of the series of tests which were essential to ensure the safety and reliability of a deterrent force which remains a factor for peace in the world and for Europe. It conducted its campaign in a spirit of unprecedented transparency which will soon be further illustrated by the arrival on the test site of international expert missions which will be able, free of all interference, to observe the absence of any harm caused to the environment. The signature of the protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the coming weeks will demonstrate the far-reaching nature of this decision as far as we are concerned.

My country is determined to continue the unflagging efforts to arrive as soon as possible at the conclusion of a treaty which will rid the world of nuclear tests. The stakes are historic. The outcome depends on us. Whether we consider the scope of the treaty, its entry into force, the organization which will monitor its implementation or the verification regime, we have now reached the final stage of the negotiations. France will work together with you to help to find common ground. It will continue to take every initiative - in attempts to reconcile positions, analyse the substance and produce compromise wording - which will help us to achieve agreement and make it possible to sign the treaty at the beginning of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

By resuming our work without delay, by taking up our task immediately, thanks to the skill of our President, to whom I pay tribute and thanks to the spirit of compromise shown by all, which I welcome, we have, as we should all realize, done much more than take a procedural decision. We have created

(Mr. Bourgois, France)

expectations within the international community. And here we have generated momentum. The Conference cannot dash these hopes or halt the momentum without destroying the credit it has built up. Each of our countries, each of our peoples, will find grounds for hope if we succeed. A world which has moved closer to nuclear disarmament, the ultimate goal which we seek in the context of general and complete disarmament. A world where the risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been lessened and where a fundamental political commitment made last May has been kept. Let us not allow this opportunity to slip.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for her statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Starr.

Mr. STARR (Australia): Commenting on the cessation of nuclear testing by the French Government, the Secretary-General of the South Pacific Forum spoke for each of the nations of the Forum, including Australia, when he said: "This comes as a great relief to all of us".

It is notable that the programme of tests was reduced and concluded earlier than originally intended. It represents the success of strong opposition in the international community to resumption of nuclear testing. France must act now to fulfil its promise, with the United States and the United Kingdom, to sign and ratify the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, thus committing itself in a legally binding way never to test again in the South Pacific. In this regard, I welcome the commitment just given by Ambassador Bourgois and, if I could also divert further from my text, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome warmly the announcement by the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran, that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty will be signed in Cairo in April.

It is deeply regrettable that these nuclear-test explosions in the Pacific ever took place. Australia consistently opposed resumption of the tests, as we have opposed any nuclear testing by any State. We will continue to do so. The onus is now on France to work to rebuild the international confidence necessary if further progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is to be achieved.

France must also be conscious of the special obligations it has towards the peoples of the South Pacific by virtue of the location of its test site. In particular, we look to France to close its testing facilities in the Pacific, retaining only those facilities required for environmental monitoring. Australia also urges France to demonstrate its sense of responsibility to the international community by providing access to all relevant data and sites so an independent and comprehensive assessment of all the effects of its testing can be made. Similarly, France must respond to the call of South Pacific nations and accept full and exclusive responsibility for any adverse impacts from French nuclear testing on the Pacific environment and people.

Turning to the crucial task at hand in the Conference on Disarmament, Australia welcomes President Chirac's commitment to work towards a truly

(Mr. Starr, Australia)

comprehensive, that is, zero-yield, CTBT this year. For my part, I look forward to working closely with the distinguished Ambassador of France, Ambassador Bourgois, and her delegation, and other delegations in this room to conclude the CTBT.

Looking beyond the immediate and urgent need to conclude a CTBT, Australia seeks a renewed commitment from France and the other nuclear-weapon States to meet their international obligations under article VI of the NPT for further genuine steps towards complete nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement. I shall now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Kurokochi.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): I have asked for the floor today to convey to the Conference on Disarmament the statement made by the official spokesman of my Government, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, on President Chirac's announcement on 29 January to end France's nuclear testing permanently.

The statement reads as follows:

"Since France decided to resume nuclear testing in June last year, the Government of Japan has, at every opportunity, strongly urged France to reconsider that decision and strongly requested it to stop nuclear testing every time it was conducted. The United Nations resolution calling for the immediate cessation of nuclear testing, which was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly last year with the support of many countries, indicates the sincere will of the international community for the cessation of nuclear testing. It is extremely regrettable that France has conducted nuclear tests as many as six times despite repeated appeals from the international community including Japan.

"I sincerely hope that France will redouble its efforts toward an early conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty and for promoting nuclear disarmament leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Japan, on its part, will continue its efforts, aiming at the completion of the negotiations on substantive matters by this spring and the signing of the treaty by autumn."

Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate Japan's position that no nuclear test should be conducted by any State.

Now I would like to draw the attention of the Conference on Disarmament to another issue. Let me read the statement made on 28 January by the Press Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II by the United States of America.

"Japan wholeheartedly welcomes the ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II by the Senate of the United States of America on 26 January as a major contribution to advancing nuclear arms reduction.

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

"Japan hopes that the Russian Federation will follow the United States and ratify START II so that this treaty can come into effect at the earliest possible date."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Japan for her statement. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Goonetilleke.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, please allow me to extend to you the warm congratulations and best wishes of the delegation of Sri Lanka upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that with your diplomatic skills and experience and your businesslike approach, you will be able to set in motion the processes needed for completing the responsibilities entrusted to the Conference.

Let me also congratulate through you the CD's immediate past President, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi, for his contribution to the Conference and particularly his sincere efforts aimed at resolving the inordinately delayed and vexed issue of expansion of the CD's membership. And let us all hope that the Conference will be able to untie this Gordian knot, at least this year.

Allow me to place on record my delegation's sincere appreciation of the contributions to the Conference of Mr. Vladimir F. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his able deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament our new colleagues from Cuba, Kenya and Nigeria and wish them a fruitful tour of duty at Geneva.

The year 1996 brings the Conference to the final phase of the comprehensive-nuclear-test-ban-treaty negotiations. The General Assembly in its resolution 50/65 provided some guidelines in this regard. First, it called upon the CD to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban at the commencement of its 1996 session in order to complete the final text of the treaty as soon as possible in 1996. Second, it declared its readiness to resume consideration of the item before its fifty-first session, for endorsing the text of the treaty. It should, therefore, be our earnest endeavour to work harder with the objective of finalizing the treaty text as early as possible to complete this task at least by June to facilitate the reconvening of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly for endorsing the treaty before September 1996. Her Excellency, Chandrika Kumaratunga, the President of Sri Lanka, has instructed my delegation to cooperate fully with the Conference towards realizing this objective.

My delegation is fully aware of the views expressed by some delegations about the time-frame within which to complete the negotiations. Given the fact that some of us had been urging the Conference to complete the work in 1994, mid-1996 cannot be considered too unrealistic a goal to achieve. In the circumstances, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban should endeavour to complete the work by June this year.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

Since the commencement of its current session, what the CD has achieved in respect of the CTBT negotiations is indeed commendable. On the very first day of the CD this year, you, Mr. President, moved its business with great agility, which enabled the immediate re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. Members of the Conference are fully aware of the crucial role you played in developing a consensus towards this unique achievement. This was followed by the holding of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB the same day, which is no mean feat. The swiftness with which the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee moved in commencing the work on the CTBT is indicative of the strong desire of all members of the Conference to begin its work in earnest. My delegation is convinced that the momentum we have jointly created will facilitate completion of the drafting work on time. Let me congratulate Ambassador Jaap Ramaker upon his assumption of the Chair of the Committee and Ambassadors Berdennikov and Zahran as Chairmen of Working Groups 1 and 2 respectively, and assure them of my delegation's continuous support.

The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups have an important role to play in the coming months if the Conference is to conclude its drafting work as envisaged. Among the issues that have to be expeditiously sorted out are the scope of the treaty, its verification regime, on-site inspections, the international monitoring system architecture and a host of other crucial issues. Resolution of these issues requires a harmonious blending of hard work and political will on the part of the members and great skill and patience on the part of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups.

Much has been said about the scope of the CTBT. This fundamental issue is yet to be resolved. However, it is gratifying to note the emerging support for a true-zero-yield CTBT. Given the very nature of nuclear-test explosions and the indistinguishability of nuclear tests carried out for weapon and peaceful purposes, there should be a clear understanding that there will be no peaceful nuclear explosions within the framework of the future CTBT. Absence of such an understanding would only have the effect of circumvention of the treaty.

The treaty scope must also determine the status of subcritical tests which are claimed to be undertaken for ensuring the safety and reliability of existing weapons; however, these tests could also serve to further improve the existing nuclear weapons. Having banned nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions, should we permit subcritical tests which would allow the nuclear-weapon States to improve their arsenals and design third-generation nuclear weapons? In this chamber and elsewhere, we have heard statements in regard to the discriminatory nature of the NPT. If our intention is to have a truly universal CTBT, its provisions should apply equally to both nuclear-weapon States and to non-nuclear-weapon States. These are the issues the CD has to grapple with in the coming months, as it braces itself with the debracketing of more than 1,000 pairs of square brackets around the draft text. While we are at it, the Conference must not reject out of hand constructive proposals made by delegations for strengthening the draft treaty and promoting nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

Several delegations which addressed the Conference so far this year have referred to the nexus between the CTBT and nuclear disarmament. Sri Lanka shares the views expressed by those delegations and supports their demand that the CD should focus its attention on nuclear disarmament as well.

For over three decades the international community has tried to ban nuclear-weapon test explosions. It was the United Kingdom, the United States and the former USSR, three of the five nuclear-weapon States, which initiated work in this direction as far back as 1958. Mutual suspicion, inability to decide on the number of unmanned seismic stations and the number of annual mandatory on-site inspections, reportedly contributed to the failure of that attempt at achieving a nuclear test ban then. However, the international community succeeded in taking limited steps through the partial test-ban Treaty in 1963 and the threshold test-ban Treaty in 1974. Furthermore, the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons was stopped through the NPT, which came into effect in 1970. Despite these concrete measures vertical proliferation reached dizzy heights in the following decades and it will take many more years before the effects of the START treaties become visible. Yet, we are nowhere close to the total elimination of nuclear weapons or safe from nuclear war, while the nuclear-weapon States continue to hold thousands of nuclear weapons and sit on mountains of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. Another disturbing development in this post-cold-war era is the steps taken by the nuclear-weapon States to trade quantity for quality. Such qualitative development of nuclear weapons certainly does not augur well for achieving our final objective, namely the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is gratifying to note that there is a common understanding on the part of all of us representing the nuclear haves and the have-nots that our common goal is a world free of nuclear weapons. To begin with, nuclear weapons should have been banned 50 years ago when the destructive potential and the indiscriminate nature of the new weapon were first discovered. Yet, 50 years later we continue to lisp the same mantram as if nuclear weapons could be wished away. Our words have to be matched with concrete steps; if not, another half a century later we shall still be repeating the same mantram without achieving any progress.

The relationship between the cessation of nuclear-test explosions and nuclear disarmament was referred to in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was adopted by consensus. It clearly states that the "nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament ...". And that was in 1978. Article VI of the NPT, signed more than a quarter of a century ago, referred to the need to take "effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament ...". Regrettably, despite these decisions reached by consensus and binding treaty obligations, no decisive step has been taken by the nuclear-weapon States for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This certainly is not a satisfactory situation. Something has to be done sooner rather than later to remedy it.

It is in this context that my delegation wishes to refer to resolution 50/70 P on nuclear disarmament which the delegation of Myanmar, inspired by the call made by the heads of State and/or Government of

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Non-Aligned countries in Cartagena last year, steered through the General Assembly. Despite its shortcomings as seen by some delegations, the resolution which was adopted amid the 50th anniversary celebration of the United Nations is seen by many as a beacon that would direct us to the twenty-first century, into a world without nuclear weapons or nuclear blackmail. The resolution calls upon the Conference to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

My delegation is fully cognizant of the views expressed by some nuclear-weapon States with regard to nuclear disarmament and the role of the Conference, as well as the reference made in the resolution to negotiations within a time-bound framework. Yet, we beg to differ from the views expressed by them, to distance the subject of nuclear disarmament from this Conference. If total elimination of nuclear weapons is our ultimate goal, that journey must begin here in this very chamber. There is no alternative to the CD, which is the sole negotiating forum for disarmament matters, to negotiate matters relating to nuclear disarmament. None of the non-nuclear-weapon States would dare hand over this responsibility, which affects the interests of the entire world, to the five nuclear-weapon States and opt to sit by idly, for the issue affects not only the interests of the five nuclear-weapon States, but also those of all countries. In this regard, allow me to quote from paragraph 28 of the final document of SSOD-I devoted to disarmament: "All the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations. Consequently, all States ... have the right to participate in disarmament negotiations. They have the right to participate on an equal footing in those multilateral negotiations which have a direct bearing on their national security. While disarmament is the responsibility of all States, the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament ...". This position has been reiterated in the declaration of "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, wherein the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitment, as stated in article VI, to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament.

Similarly, we see no basis for the position expressed by some nuclear-weapon States that we should patiently wait until the year 2003 for the achievement of the goals of the START treaties and thereafter allow the subject of nuclear disarmament to be discussed by the five nuclear-weapon States and, depending on the outcome of those discussions, decide whether or not to involve the CD in the negotiations. Again, this position is based on the fallacy that the question of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be the exclusive domain of the nuclear Five.

If we all genuinely subscribe to the final goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons, the time is now for us to take appropriate steps to achieve that objective. Should we fail to act now, another 50 years may go by and we shall still be speaking of our goal without taking concrete measures to achieve it. There is no guarantee that the present propitious political climate will remain unchanged for ever. Future generations will heap the blame on those pundits who thought that the total elimination of nuclear

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weapons could be achieved by proceeding at a snails's pace. This is the rationale of the demand for the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework.

Sri Lanka recognizes the need for the Conference to devote a major part of its time this year to conclude the CTBT negotiations in a timely fashion. Yet, it will not be an impossible task for us to begin, even in a small way, our long and arduous trudge for realizing the dream shared by all of us. In the nuclear field, the Conference has a twofold task, namely, nuclear disarmament and prohibition of the production and stockpiling of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Let us decide to commence work on these two items, at least this year.

My delegation is happy to note the adoption, ad referendum though, of the agenda for the 1996 session contained in document CD/1379 of 23 January and the appointment of Ambassador Hocine Meghlaoui of Algeria as Special Coordinator on the future agenda of the CD. I offer my best wishes and assurances of support and close cooperation to him in his endeavours to resolve all outstanding issues on this score.

As I mentioned elsewhere in my statement, the vexed issue of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament should be resolved early. In my statement of 21 September last year, I expressed the hope that the 23 delegations would be "permitted to assume membership if not immediately, within months, preferably at the beginning of the 1996 session of the Conference". Regrettably, despite the attempts made by the previous President, there has been no discernible improvement in the situation. Sri Lanka is for the immediate and unconditional admission of all 23 delegations as members of the Conference. This has been our consistent principled and stated position. A member means a member, nothing less and nothing more. My delegation will therefore not be a party to admitting of any variations, however slight, insignificant or insubstantial they may be, of the state of being a member. To admit of such compromises would be to dilute the universally recognized and well-settled principle of sovereign equality of States, which is what the Charter of the United Nations proceeds from. Moreover it would establish an unhealthy precedent.

Even as I close my statement, it is my earnest hope that the Conference will speedily conclude its negotiation of the CTBT draft treaty, and commence work on nuclear disarmament and fissile cut-off. Meanwhile, the Special Coordinator could complete his consultations for resolving the outstanding matters concerning the remaining items on the agenda.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I give the floor to the representative of Chile, Ambassador Berguño.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, in this first statement in plenary during the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to express my keen appreciation to you for the efforts that you have made in order to achieve significant progress in our work, address the major structural questions facing the Conference on

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Disarmament and demonstrate that your well-known diplomatic skill is at the service of the great cause of disarmament. In particular, I would like to express my appreciation for your constant and emphatic references to the need to implement decision CD/1356 in full. In the final part of my statement I will demonstrate how this particular aspect is linked to the central issue of my statement.

The present pace of the negotiations on the convention for the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests (CTBT) and our common goal of concluding it this year, as well as a certain number of positions set out at earlier plenaries, make it necessary for me to set forth the reasons for which my country attaches key importance to the success of the present negotiations. The technical development of the arguments is necessarily long and I will submit it in the form of a working paper to the Conference, confining myself on this occasion to the major political principles that underpin our national perspective. These reasons led my country to sponsor General Assembly resolution 50/70 A, which deplores the continuation of nuclear testing, urges its immediate cessation and enshrines the international moratorium as a legal norm which should prevail until the entry into force of the treaty that will put an end to such tests once and for all. In this context, I have pleasure in reading out the statement made by the Government of Chili in response to France's announcement that it had irrevocably ended its testing in the South Pacific.

> "The Chilean Government welcomed with satisfaction the announcement made yesterday by the President of France, Mr. Jacques Chirac, ending nuclear explosions in the South Pacific, thereby concluding this series of tests that were a source of grave concern to the international community over a period of eight months. It also hopes that France's expressed willingness to give renewed impetus to the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) will definitively encourage other nations to abandon their testing programmes.
>
> "Santiago, 30 January 1996".

I would like to add a personal comment to this happy conclusion of an unfortunate controversy. President Chirac, in his previous capacity as Prime Minister, played an important part in preparing his country for the ban on testing in the atmosphere and he is now going to play an even more decisive role in the elimination of all tests. In the argument that opposed us, apart from our opposition to all types of nuclear testing, our concept of the Pacific basin as an area free from any nuclear threat played an important role. A meeting place of cultures, civilizations, industry and trade of fundamental significance and one in which the French presence has traditionally occupied a position close to our own maritime positions. In order to strengthen this concept of the South Pacific as an area totally free of nuclear weapons, it is essential for the three countries that signed the declaration of 20 October 1995 to confirm at an early date their support for the Treaty of Rarotonga, as they have already done for the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

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As we are referring to historical continuity, we must emphasize that the CTBT must be signed because we have undertaken to do so in the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere in Outer Space and under Water, which a group of countries unsuccessfully tried to amend at the last review conference; because the aspiration contained in the partial test-ban Treaty was reiterated in the preamble to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and because the 1995 Review and Extension Conference linked the extension of that instrument to the achievement of an ambitious programme of non-proliferation and disarmament, within which the CTBT is the cornerstone of the new structure. Why should we now renounce, vacillate or postpone the discharge of such solemn commitments? At least as regards those of our countries that have unswervingly championed the principles for attaining this objective, when it is actually within our reach, what argument could we invoke to drop our zeal and abandon the promotion of those values that we have extolled for so many years?

Historical continuity, consistency in policies, respect for treaties, is the first major reason for now championing the conclusion of a CTBT. The weight of history is important, but it is much more important to look to the future. The convention that we are advocating is neither the beginning nor the end of a programme, plan and international action to bring about a world totally rid of the nuclear threat. However, it has two essential functions. It puts an end to an era that saw the cruel effects of the use of atomic weapons and the large-scale conduct of experiments that reflected a willingness to accept the use of such weapons conceptually. The well-remembered Ambassador Marín Bosch of Mexico, in his farewell speech, recalled this chapter of human history, during which strategic thinking shook off the humanistic ideas promoted by Karl Jaspers, Bertrand Russel or Albert Einstein. By leaving this era behind, the convention would create a climate of confidence to take bolder steps in the direction of disarmament. Its second main function is to establish the basis for a programme of action without which the negotiations for international disarmament will inevitably be paralysed, the non-proliferation regime will not be enhanced and the non-nuclear States will not secure the protection and the assurances which are necessary for the flourishing of their sovereign decisions to forge an independent destiny free of the threat of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear devices which nothing and nobody can impose on peoples who, making use of their right to decide their own fate, are following the path set out in article VII of the non-proliferation Treaty.

Why is it necessary for nuclear tests to disappear from the face of the Earth? The simulation of an immoral act, this physical testing which takes the more or less aseptic form of the modelling of scientific parameters, is also a stage of preparation for action. The text submitted by Sweden to the Conference on Disarmament favours a ban also on preparations for a nuclear test, with all the difficulties that are inherent in such an undertaking. But the nuclear test itself is an advanced stage of preparation for an action contrary to international ethics and violates the rights of others. Who can precisely distinguish in these preparations the allegedly legitimate aspect of deterrence from the demonstration effects aimed at others who may be prompted

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to follow the same dangerous path and the provocation effects against those who may rightly feel threatened? The CTBT must be concluded, therefore, because the international community has an imperative need to close this chapter of nuclear testing.

We non-nuclear countries have viewed the non-proliferation Treaty as a symbol of discrimination, basically because it establishes a nuclear élite and because such an arrangement cannot be perpetuated in the international system. Nuclear deterrence can only be understood in the light of the symmetrical existence of a nuclear threat. (This is reflected in the White Paper on French defence, which indicates that deterrence and the use of atomic weapons are totally different.) But we should not interpose the threat of the bomb as the ultima ratio to control a conventional conflict. The conscience of mankind rejects all efforts to extol nuclear weapons as the source of higher responsibilities. Nevertheless it is a virtue of the NPT that it recognizes only five nuclear-weapon States. Just as the international community must strive to cooperate to bring about the gradual disarmament of these five States, so it must keep watch and act decisively to prevent any other from emerging. The indefinite extension of the NPT should not be interpreted as perpetuating an unsatisfactory state of affairs but as a determination to halt any action which would lead to accession by any country to nuclear status. The CTBT is essential in this context. If nuclear explosions are per se unacceptable, a nuclear test by a threshold State that is not recognized as a State carrying nuclear weapons would have the most severe consequences imaginable for the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (the Treaty of Tlatelolco), which contains a provision for suspension of the execution of the treaty in the event of the rise of a new Power possessing nuclear weapons. We have worked patiently to strengthen this instrument and we wish to rule out once and for all this threat to the first treaty (leaving aside the Antarctic Treaty, which applies to a sui generis region) whose achievement was to declare Latin America and the Caribbean nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The CTBT reduces the gap between the rights and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear States as long as it results in a total prohibition of all tests in all environments. In this respect, for Chile the "zero option" means an undertaking to refrain from causing or encouraging or allowing explosions to take place in any of these environments. Hydronuclear tests, hydrodynamic experiments and peaceful nuclear explosions belong to this category; the effects of inertial containment and simulation experiments in laboratories are alien to this universe, although they deserve attention because of their possible application in the development of military technologies. It is essential to be clear on this aspect in order to be able to conclude the negotiations decisively.

I would like to refer very specifically to peaceful nuclear explosions, which give rise to a basic difficulty that can only be overcome by means of a total ban. I listened very carefully to the arguments put forward by the delegation of China, which refer to old discussions in this very room, when the Eighteen-Nation Committee was in operation. The difference in the treatment of the subject in article V of the NPT and article 18 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco; the way in which this controversy affected the drafting of the

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IAEA safeguards agreements; and the fact of the coexistence of various legal regimes between nuclear Powers that can carry out peaceful explosions under the NPT, non-nuclear countries that are prevented from doing so by the same treaty, non-nuclear countries that have the right to carry them out pursuant to Tlatelolco but which do not exercise it as long as their exclusively peaceful nature has not been demonstrated technically and countries that are not subject to any rules, is equivalent to international anarchy which only the total, absolute, egalitarian ban under the CTBT can satisfactorily resolve. In the same way, any introduction of quota, thresholds, grace periods or other qualifications in the context of the CTBT would distort it and convert it into just another partial prohibition, an outcome that we cannot and must not contemplate.

It has been said that the prohibition of testing will not prevent the nuclear Powers from keeping their stockpiles and will not prevent the threshold countries, by means which are more difficult but still feasible, from crossing that threshold to become de facto nuclear Powers. This is true, but progress towards third-generation nuclear weapons will be made more difficult and various options will be closed off, as the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency so eloquently put it. In this connection the CTBT is a nuclear disarmament agreement. In order to effectively reinforce an international regime, this tool for non-proliferation needs to be supplemented by the convention that will prohibit the production of fissile material for military purposes and the constant strengthening of the international safeguards regime.

Allow me to conclude with one or two general political comments. A universally accepted CTBT will be the indispensable bridge between the NPT and all the regional treaties that are irresistibly broadening the spread of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Its political bodies, which should be genuinely representative, and its international monitoring system, which will gather together scientists from developed and developing countries in a fruitful community of ideals, should be located at the same site. For well-known reasons, Chile has already expressed its support for Vienna as the headquarters of the entire CTBT system; but if a "cut-off" convention is adopted, requiring an indispensable input from IAEA, there is all the more reason for choosing Vienna.

Along with the decision to accelerate the work of the Committee adopted by Ambassador Ramaker and the excellent contribution made by the Friend of the Chair on the subject of the Preparatory Commission, a broader political decision is necessary on the organizational aspects, which will also have an impact on the work of the scientific experts.

One last word on participation: careful study of the rules of procedure has persuaded me that, without any change in its rules, the Conference has all the power it needs to offer all the Member States of the United Nations the broadest and most egalitarian participation possible, thereby contributing to the universality of the effort to complete one of the most important treaties in the history of international disarmament. The representative of Sri Lanka's timely reference to paragraph 28 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, a paragraph and document that

(Mr. Berquño, Chile)

constitute the direct predecessors of the current rules of procedure of the CD, is part of the reply to the questions of participation, expansion and universality which are such a cause of concern for us and which you, yourself Mr. President, as well as your predecessor, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi, have put so much effort into resolving.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): The issues which I briefly wish to address are the President of France's announcement on the cessation of nuclear tests, and the decision of the United States Senate on the ratification of the START II treaty.

The South African Government is pleased at the announcement by President Chirac on 29 January 1996 that France has ceased nuclear-weapons tests, and that the protocols to the Rarotonga treaty, which establishes a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Pacific, will be signed by France shortly.

South Africa has consistently condemned the six French tests and the two Chinese tests in the last nine months, and remains firmly opposed to the testing of nuclear weapons, as a matter of principle. The South African Government is convinced that the cessation of all nuclear testing will enhance the climate for negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty within the 1996 deadline which has been set by the international community. The early and successful conclusion of a CTBT is the most important priority for the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva this year.

The conclusion of a CTBT in 1996 forms an integral part of the agreement on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament which was adopted by consensus at the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference during May last year. This deadline was subsequently confirmed by the entire international community when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the consensus resolution on the CTBT calling for the conclusion of the Conference on Disarmament negotiations so as to enable the treaty to be signed at the outset of this year's General Assembly session. South Africa furthermore regards the CTBT as integral to the achievement of the continued and common goal of increased international peace and security.

Before concluding, my delegation would also like to extend our congratulations to the United States on the United States Senate's decision to approve the ratification of the START II treaty. We urge the Russian Federation to also take the necessary steps for ratification of this treaty in order that it can enter into force at the earliest possible time.

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement. That concludes the list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? France has asked for the floor. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (Translated from French): I regret to have to take the floor again at a time when France is not alone in considering that not a minute must be lost to conclude a treaty that will completely and definitively ban nuclear testing, which my country was the first to propose in August 1995 should be based on the zero option. In response to some delegations which have chosen to address what is now in the past, and whose feelings I understand, I will quote the very terms which were used by the President of the French Republic:

> "I know that the decision which I took last June may, in France and elsewhere, have given rise to feelings of concern and emotion. While my resolve was not affected, I was not indifferent to these tides of opinion. They bear witness to the growing attachment of the inhabitants of the Earth to collective security and protection of the environment. These are concerns that I share."

I must also - and I regret this with regard to a delegation with which cooperation in the negotiations, as far as I know, is close and fruitful - take up some words which express distrust and doubt vis-à-vis my country which our commitments show to be absolutely unjustified. France, which has a presence in the South Pacific, is perfectly aware of its responsibilities and shoulders them. By announcing at the highest level the signature of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga, France responded in advance to the concerns expressed by that delegation, just as I thought I had replied in advance to another type of concern with my announcement of the forthcoming arrival of various independent expert missions at the Mururoa test site. I would hope that the work that we are urgently called on to tackle now will not be further delayed by considerations which have nothing to do with the negotiations themselves, and which today have no foundation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for her statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? It does not seem to be the case, so we shall proceed further.

I should now like to take up the new requests for participation in the work of the Conference during this year. Requests were received from Armenia, Yemen and Mauritius. They are before you under a covering note by the President in document CD/WP.471. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Armenia, Yemen and Mauritius to participate, as non-members, in the work of the Conference without having to convene an information meeting for this purpose, on the understanding that this would not constitute a precedent for future similar requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As you are aware, I am continuing my consultations with a view to developing a basis for consensus on how to deal with nuclear disarmament. Similarly, I am pursuing my efforts aimed at the implementation of the decision on expansion of membership (CD/1356) at the earliest possible date. I shall keep you informed on any progress achieved on these issues.

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for next week. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 8 February 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.